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UNCLAS THE HAGUE 001957

SIPDIS

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TAGS: SNAR KCRM NL

SUBJECT: DUTCH PARLIAMENT FOR LEGALIZED SOFT DRUG
DELIVERIES TO COFFEE SHOPS

REF: THE HAGUE 1370

SUMMARY

¶1. ON JUNE 27, A MAJORITY OF THE SECOND CHAMBER OF THE DUTCH PARLIAMENT ADOPTED A LABOR PARTY (PVEDA) RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE GOVERNMENT TO LEGALIZE THE SUPPLY OF DUTCH-GROWN CANNABIS ("NEDERWIET") TO COFFEE SHOPS. DUTCH JUSTICE MINISTER KORTHALS REJECTED THE PROPOSAL. HE WANTS TO DISCUSS THE ISSUE WITH THE CABINET ON JUNE ¶30.

LEGALIZED SOFT DRUG DELIVERIES TO COFFEE SHOPS

¶2. BY A ONE-VOTE MAJORITY (73:72), THE SECOND CHAMBER OF THE DUTCH PARLIAMENT ADOPTED A RESOLUTION REQUESTING THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT TO LEGALIZE THE SUPPLY OF DUTCH-GROWN CANNABIS ("NEDERWIET") TO COFFEE SHOPS. THE RESOLUTION, DRAFTED BY THE GOVERNMENT COALITION PARTY OF PVEDA, WAS SUPPORTED BY COALITION PARTNER D66, AND OPPOSITION PARTIES OF GREENLEFT AND SOCIALISTS. THIRD COALITION PARTY VVD, AND CHRISTIAN OPPOSITION PARTIES OPPOSED.

¶3. THE RESOLUTION ASKS THE GOVERNMENT TO DRAW UP NEW GUIDELINES FOR PUBLIC PROSECUTORS OUTLINING THE STRICT CONDITIONS UNDER WHICH THE CONTROLLED CULTIVATION OF "NEDERWIET" AND THE CONTROLLED DELIVERY OF "NEDERWIET" TO COFFEE SHOPS WOULD BE "TOLERATED." UNDER THE PROPOSAL, PRODUCTION OF AND TRADE IN SOFT DRUGS WOULD REMAIN ILLEGAL.

¶4. THE LEFT-OF-CENTER PARTIES BELIEVE THAT THE RESOLUTION, IF CARRIED OUT, WOULD BRING AN END TO THE CONTROVERSIAL AND HYPOCRITICAL SITUATION OF "TOLERATING" FRONT-DOOR SALES OF SOFT DRUGS IN COFFEE SHOPS, WHILE PROSECUTING BACK-DOOR DELIVERIES.

JUSTICE MINISTER AGAINST PROPOSAL

¶5. DUTCH JUSTICE MINISTER KORTHALS REJECTED THE RESOLUTION. HE WANTS TO RAISE THE ISSUE IN A MEETING OF THE FULL CABINET ON JUNE 30. ACCORDING TO KORTHALS, THE PROPOSAL WOULD VIOLATE INTERNATIONAL TREATIES AND ENCOURAGE DRUG "TOURISM." MOREOVER, ACCORDING TO KORTHALS, IT WOULD BE PARADOXICAL TO ALLOW THE DELIVERY OF NEDERWIET BUT BAN MOROCCAN HASHISH.

¶6. IN A RECENT REPORT ON DUTCH SOFT DRUG POLICY, KORTHALS ALSO CONFIRMED THAT THE DUTCH GOVERNMENT HAS NO INTENTION OF CHANGING ITS SOFT DRUG POLICY (REFTEL). KORTHALS REACTED TO PLEAS BY SOME 20 DUTCH MAYORS TO ALLOW EXPERIMENTS WITH CONTROLLED CULTIVATION OF AND TRADE IN DUTCH-GROWN CANNABIS. THE MAYORS HAD ARGUED THAT CURRENT SOFT DRUG POLICY IS UNCLEAR AND HAS UNDESIRABLE SIDE-EFFECTS, SUCH AS INCREASED PUBLIC NUISANCE AND CRIME. THEY FELT THAT CONTROLLED CULTIVATION AND TRADE IN NEDERWIET WOULD LEAD TO MORE TRANSPARENCY, PUSH CRIMINALS OUT OF THE MARKET, AND PROTECT USERS' HEALTH THROUGH PRODUCT QUALITY CONTROL.

COMMENT

¶7. IT IS VERY DOUBTFUL THAT KORTHALS WILL IMPLEMENT THE RESOLUTION. HE FINDS MUCH SUPPORT WITHIN THE GOVERNMENT, PARTICULARLY FROM PM KOK, WHO DOES NOT WANT TO DAMAGE FOREIGN RELATIONS. THE TIMING IS BAD. FRANCE WILL TAKE OVER EU PRESIDENCY AS OF JULY 1. THE FRENCH

HAVE ALWAYS PUT GREAT PRESSURE ON THE NETHERLANDS TO SHARPEN ITS SOFT DRUG POLICY. THEY WILL CERTAINLY OPPOSE THE PARLIAMENTARY RESOLUTION.

18. ON THE OTHER HAND, DOMESTIC PRESSURE WILL INCREASE. THE RECENT SOFT DRUG REPORT NOTES A SIGNIFICANT INCREASE IN THE NUMBER OF ILLEGAL OUTLETS FOR CANNABIS SALE (I.E. NON-COFFEESHOPS), AND IN THE NUMBER OF ILLEGAL CANNABIS GROWERS. THE REPORT OBSERVED THAT, IN SOME CITIES, A LARGE PART OF HOME CULTIVATION IS IN THE HANDS OF CRIMINAL ORGANIZATIONS, WHICH PUT PRESSURE ON PEOPLE TO MAKE THEIR PROPERTY AVAILABLE FOR ILLEGAL CULTIVATION. SEEMINGLY, MORE AND MORE LOCAL AUTHORITIES WANT TO SOLVE THE DRUG PROBLEMS IN THEIR CITIES BY DECRIMINALIZING SOFT DRUGS.

TOKOLA